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# The Potter and The Clay

Wyatt Sawyer

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**HARDING**  
U N I V E R S I T Y

THE POTTER AND THE CLAY

Jeremiah 18:1-12

INT: Parabolic lesson taught Jews in time of national crisis. God often used common things to teach His great lessons. Israel was either unaware of her danger or unheeding it. God's effort to stir her to thinking and bring repentance.

I. "GO DOWN TO THE POTTER'S HOUSE."

- A. Pottery-making: one of the oldest arts of human race.
- B. Each village, town and city had potters and pot. shops.
- C. What do we see when we get to the potter's house?
  - 1. Potter or thrower; so called because he throws the clay on the wheel for working.
  - 2. Wheel. Of stone or wood. Large wheel below for feet and smaller wheel for working clay into vessels.
  - 3. Potter's clay heaped in shaded corner washed and kneaded by foot.
  - 4. Outside window is potter's field where he discards impurities, inferior clay and broken pottery.
  - 5. Finally, his display of artistically designed pots, vases, bowls, plates, platters, cups and urns.

II. "CANNOT I DO TO YOU (Israel) AS THIS POTTER?"

- A. Jeremiah stood by as the potter worked his clay.
  - 1. First vessel he made was marred in his hands.
  - 2. Did not stop till clay had yielded to his touch.
- B. This describes God's work with His contrary children.
  - 1. Early inhabitants were marred badly. Gen. 6:5-6.
  - 2. Potter remade the world from Noah's stock. 8:17.
  - 3. Gentiles were cast aside to season as he used Abraham's stock to build a nation. Gen. 12:1-2.
  - 4. Re-formed His people with only Joshua, Caleb and the young Israelites after murmurings. Num. 14:30-32.
  - 5. Again reworked His clay after Babylonian captivity. II Chron. 36:21. Looked promising. No idolatry!!!
  - 6. Forced to rework the Jews one more time using Christ as His helper, but cast them away. Matt. 24:15.
  - 7. Finally God added Gentile clay to Jewish foundation and formed a worthy vessel, the church. M. 16:18.

III. "SO ARE YE IN MINE HAND."

- A. Man is but clay on God's potter's wheel of the earth. Gen. 2:7. Job recognized this truth. Job 10:9.
- B. God could force us or break us at will, but grants us the use of our free moral agency. Mark 16:15-16.
- C. He allows us freedom to go astray and mar ourselves, and then offers to remake our lives. II Cor. 5:17.



3C-RB  
R-P

- D. Essential that He get us when the clay texture is plastic and pliable. Able to be moulded. Prov.22:16
- E. But if get us later He can add some moisture of love and some other ingredients of faith and obedience and still make a worthy vessel.
- F. Especially is this important in parents because they mold their children's lives of the future.
- 1. Ill. A Piece of Clay. (Below)

INV: All recognize that we are helpless to save ourselves.  
Can only yield to the Master craftsman to be formed.  
He will make a new creature out of us. John 3:5.

He can also rework the clay to future usefulness. R-P.

A PIECE OF CLAY

I took a piece of plastic clay and idly fashioned it one day,  
And as my fingers pressed it still, it moved and yielded to my will.

I came again when days were past--the piece of clay was hard at last;

The form I gave it, it still bore, but I could change that form no more.

I took a piece of living clay, and gently formed it day by day  
And moulded with my power and art, a young child's soft and yielding heart.

I came again when years were gone. It was a man I looked upon.  
He still that early impress wore, and I could change him nevermore.